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ABSTRACT

Designed for braille transcribers and teachers of the visually handicapped, this document presents three short articles about literary braille. The first article discusses common pitfalls that occur on trial manuscripts, such as misformed characters, missing and added dots, incorrect title pages, and incorrect word divisions. The second article gives suggestions concerning the use of dictionaries in proofreading. The third article provides a brief discussion on title page information, followed by a word about two dictionaries recently acquired by the Braille Book Bank of the National Braille Association. (LH)

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SHARPEN your skills

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LITERARY BRAILLE

The Trial Manuscript: Common Pitfalls

Lorraine M. Evensen, Vice Chairman

The material in this column is a preview of some matters I propose to discuss with participants in my workshop for teachers of braille to sighted people, to be part of the NBA meeting in St. Petersburg.

I have always enjoyed teaching, and in teaching the literary braille code I am happiest when the student learns the code, passes the "exam" successfully, and receives her/his Library of Congress certificate. I am always distressed when one of my students fails the exam. I look for ways to help a student do her best job on the trial manuscript. For the purpose of this column I have turned to failures — the reports to those who did not pass — so that I could find some common pitfalls. The positive aspect is to suggest how to avoid these pitfalls.

I have taught classes of 4-8 students, and I can help them by reinforcing the lessons from the Instructional Manual. Those who learn braille "at home," without a teacher's suggestions, have to work harder and use more of their own resources to pass in a good trial manuscript. Perhaps this material should be primarily for them.

I reviewed 45 reports. I will go over quickly the commonest errors, whether in exercises or in the trial manuscript. One person failed almost only because of misformed characters — two points for each mistake. The usual problems are reversals such as dot 5 *t* instead of dot 5 *ou* sign as in *thought*; or *e* for *i* or the *his* sign instead of the *was* sign. Still others are *en* for *in* and "of" instead of "with" — or vice versa on all of these.

Another common error is that of missing dots, e.g., dots 5,6 *m* rather than 5,6 *n* for the *tion* sign, or 5,6 *n* rather than 5,6 *y* for the *ity* sign. A third is the *ness* sign, dots 5,6 *s*, for the *ment* sign, 5,6 *t*.

There are also the added dots: the *for* sign for the *er* sign, or dots in blank cells. Missing dots and added dots should be caught by good — that is, thorough — proofreading. Proofreading will also catch misplaced dots: dots 5,6 instead of 2,3 for the *be* sign in *between*, or dot 1 or 6 for the apostrophe, dot 3. Dot 5 has been wrongly used for the capital sign, dot 6, and the period, dots 2,5,6, for the closing quotation mark, dots 3,5,6.

I have tried to have my students write three, four or five title pages to be sure they know the rules and to avoid common errors: use double capitals for the author's name but not for the middle initial; do not write Volume I when the book is in one volume only. Or the student forgets the running head on the contents or other preliminary pages. Use the double capitals for THE END — unless there is not enough room without going to another sheet.

I recommend that students memorize the short-form list, including how letters and words can and cannot be added. The reports show *rcv(ed)* instead of *rcvd* for received, or *ab* instead of *abv* for *above*; or omit *(be)ss* for *besides*, *qk(en)* for *quicken*, *lr(ing)* for *lettering*.

I expected to see *canc(er)* instead of *c(ance)r*, but I was very surprised how often dot 5 *r* was not used for *right* as in *bright*, *frightened*, etc., or the dot 5 *u* was so often left out in *thunder*, *blunder*, or *mother* was left out of *smother*. And of course many people did not put *and of* together, nor all the others — *for*, *the*, *with*, *a*. Perhaps still pardonable, although incorrect, are those who obeyed the pause rule, even after the BANA changes of 1980.

I cannot leave this subject without pointing out that many incorrect, even silly word divisions (such as dividing a one-syllable word) would have been avoided if the student had used the suggested dictionary, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*.

These are a few suggestions. In closing I invite you to send ideas and examples, preferably before the workshop in May, but certainly bring them with you to the workshop. That will insure a useful and lively discussion—participation by all.

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LITERARY BRAILLE

A Dictionary?

Maxine B. Dorf, Chairman

In the official braille code, *English Braille, American Edition,* there is no reference to a specific dictionary to be used in braille transcribing. Section 24a in a parenthetical note does read: "No dictionary with a copyright older than ten years should be used." Under *Equipment* in the *Introduction* to the *Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing* of the Library of Congress, you will find among items needed, "a standard dictionary, preferably *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language,* College Edition."

This preference was based on a recommendation of the Braille Authority, the predecessor of the Braille Authority of North America. Accordingly, in a cooperative effort, the 1970 edition of this dictionary was made available in braille by the American Printing House for the Blind and the then Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress. This 72-volume braille edition occupies 24 feet of shelving and cost in the range of $900 — hardly an item to be purchased by an individual in small living quarters!

There are many recognized dictionaries available to braille transcribers, but few of them are totally accessible to braille proofreaders. The 1976 edition of the *Concise Heritage Dictionary* is now available in recorded form — 56 four-track cassettes at 15/16 i.p.s. The voice-indexing, small amount of space required for storage, and comparatively low cost will make it possible for the proofreader or student to have ready access to a good dictionary. Elsewhere in this *Bulletin* you will find a special announcement with further information on packaging, cost, etc. of this dictionary.

It is not our place to say that one dictionary is better than another; we should insist, however, that the transcriber communicate to the proofreader the exact dictionary consulted, title and date of publication. Close adherence to this procedure will save valuable time on the part of the proofreader and eliminate undue criticism of the transcription relating to syllabication and Anglicized words.

I share with you this hypothetical dialog between proofreader and transcriber:

Proofreader: The words *service* and *gently* were divided as follows: ser-vice, gent-ly; according to *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language,* 1974, the syllabications should be serv-ice, gen-tly.

Transcriber: My dictionary, *Webster's Seventh Collegiate,* 1971, shows ser-vice and gent-ly as correct syllables. This type of critique bothers me considerably since I am so conscientious about using the dictionary at all times.

Proofreader: If you had given, in an accompanying note, the source of your word divisions, I would have gone to that source for confirmation. When I am not advised of the dictionary used, I assume that the one recommended some years ago is still used by most braillists.

We conclude then that a brief note to the proofreader including dictionary information and any irregularities in format will equally benefit both parties — the transcriber and the proofreader.

The Title Page

Maxine B. Dorf, Chairman

Persons who transcribe textbooks as well as books of general interest often confuse title page formats. To assist those transcribers who so generously work for NBA's Reader-Transcriber Registry, a discussion of title page information and format follows.

According to the official code, *English Braille, American Edition*, items that *must* be included on a title page are: title, subtitle (if any), author(s), publisher, copyright, number of volumes, volume number, inclusive braille pages in the volume, transcriber's name or name of printing establishment, and year of embossing or transcribing. The title and author(s) only should appear in double capitals, and abbreviations other than those used for states, those associated with names, and any in the titles should be avoided. Line 1 of the page should be used for the title or a portion of it while line 25 must be used for the year of transcribing. The number of volumes should be expressed in words, the volume number itself in roman numerals, and the pages in both roman and arabic numbers. Example:

In Three Volumes
Volume II
Pages i-ii and 75-150

Do not fall into the trap of inserting *Volume I* when the book is only in one volume. Example:

In One Volume
Pages i-iii and 1-77

Print may show a symbol for *copyright*—the letter *c* inscribed in a circle; in braille the word "Copyright" is substituted. Lines are centered in the horizontal writing space and, information permitting, lines are left blank between segments—that is, following title and subtitle, author(s), publisher and copyright information, and transcribing data.

Further discussion on the title page can be found in Lesson Seventeen of the *Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing* of the Library of Congress. This lesson along with Lesson Nineteen contains samples of title pages.

Another Dictionary

Visually handicapped proofreaders, who have been faced with almost insurmountable odds in the cost and housing of a dictionary in braille (see Literary Braille in the fall 1983 issue of the *Bulletin*), will be interested in the following information: The Braille Book Bank of the National Braille Association has recently acquired the master for *Webster's New World Quick Reference Dictionary*, 20 volumes, occupying less than two feet of shelf space. Words are syllabized and given very brief definitions. The subsidized cost to individuals of the dictionary (1,716 pages) is $120.12. At long last with this and/or the voice-indexed edition of *Concise Heritage Dictionary*, also noted in the previous issue of the *Bulletin*, proofreaders can experience a fair degree of independence in the use of the dictionary.